



Is A Part Of Your Business ‘Unwell’?

How to improve the areas of your business that just keep under-performing?

Introduction



As you look around many parts of your business will be doing well. However, is there a business unit or cost centre that has not been operating as well as the rest? Has it in fact been under-performing for a long time, despite trying several initiatives?

Your people in this business unit probably work hard enough but the whole thing has days when it feels like a misfiring engine. The team performs poorly and the atmosphere is often flat and depressed. It feels as if there is something tantalisingly missing and people don't really get any great satisfaction out of their jobs. Despite all the hard work, prior changes have brought only patchy and unreliable benefits....it seems as if the area is in some way ‘unwell’.

So how can you inspire and sustain a real transformation in purpose, systems and culture where other methods have failed? How can you create a business team that really can perform?

Tricordant helps to turn round such under-performing business units, delivering an initial 10% to 30% improvement across a range of their key performance measures, and setting them on a path to a healthy future.

Examples of benefits achieved

- Profit 4% to 17%
- Customer defects cut to 18ppm
- £1 million off payroll overheads
- £10 million off supply chain costs
- Kaizen ideas 800 to 1300/month
- Transformed team motivation

Which Areas Of Your Business Are ‘Unwell’?

Please go through the self-diagnosis below. Do more than two of the items apply to the organisational unit you're most concerned about? If so then it's indicative of a complex, system-wide set of issues.

A Quick Self-Diagnosis

1. *The product and its market are fine, but you just aren't capturing new customers or improving the service.*
2. *You've invested in good technology and IT, but you aren't getting the productivity you should be.*
3. *The calibre of the people is fine but they aren't gelling as a team and there's no “buzz in the air”.*
4. *The area's managers have good skills and experience but haven't achieved a breakthrough in motivation.*
5. *They've been trained in improvement tools (e.g. Lean, 6σ) but benefits are inconsistent and disappointing.*
6. *You've set them clear stretch targets but they aren't grabbing control and really going for goal.*
7. *There are obvious opportunities to get better but there's no culture of continuous improvement or learning.*
8. *They've had every encouragement to sort things out but the teams are still blaming each other.*

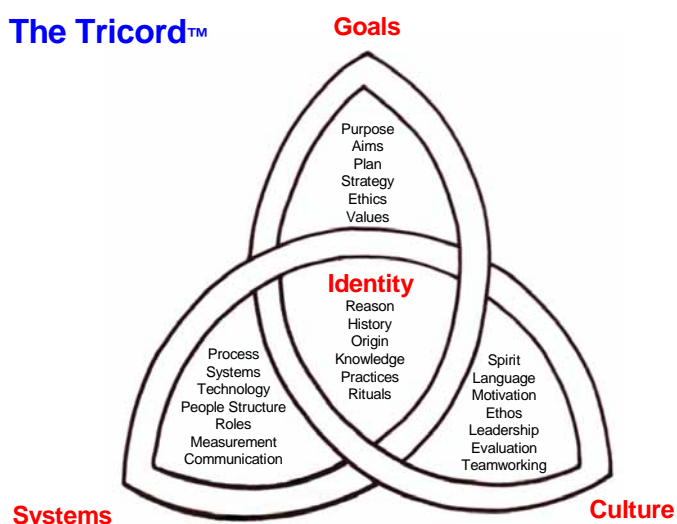
Using the analogy of diagnosing a sick patient, it does not feel you are treating a simple, temporary ailment, such as an infection, broken arm or sore tooth. We know how to cure conditions like these; take a pill, get your arm put in a cast, or go to the dentist. Your problem here isn't as simple as just mending or replacing a 'broken part'.

The analogy is more like treating a patient with a long-term condition such as lung disease, obesity, chronic fatigue syndrome or depression. In these cases it's about helping the person with their complex mix of mental and physical health issues, and also probably their attitudes, morale and lifestyle. Your problem here is about helping your business unit sort out a complex web of interrelated social and technical systems issues.

If you feel this might be true for an area of your organisation then you need to do two things; 1) Conduct a full Whole Systems Health Check to confirm the diagnosis, and 2) Initiate a Rapid Health Improvement Programme to swiftly get the area fit and healthy. This can be done for any organisational unit: the whole of a business or just a part of it; a big area or small one; on one site or across several.

What's A Whole Systems Health Check?

The Tricord™



Tricordant has developed an approach to improving organisational health. It is based on the Tricord™ which is used to map the health of an organisation and to diagnose complex, systemic problems.

Spotting the gaps, misalignments and conflicts provides the way of doing a Whole Systems Health Check.

The Health Check is done for each team, function or department within the unit under review, as well as subsequently for the unit as a whole. It determines which aspects of the Tricord™ are incomplete or misaligned and why the organisational unit as a whole is trapped into being

dysfunctional, under-producing, cost-adding, demotivated or incapable.

If all dimensions of the Tricord™ can be realigned then the organisation will become more productive, capable, competitive and successful. We can do an initial Whole Systems Health Check usually within a matter of days, and then work with you to design a Rapid Health Improvement Programme to put the area back on the right track.

How Do Rapid Health Improvement Programmes Work?

After the Health Check you will want to start to address the diagnosed root causes of the area's under-performance. People are usually keen to avoid another big initiative and list of jargon. You'll want to sort it out yourself, with expert and experienced guidance only when needed, and not have it 'done to you'. We know you need to stay in control of the process and keep an eye on time and the costs. That's why Tricordant has developed its Rapid Health Improvement Programmes, which give the following benefits:

- People from across the ‘whole system’ that’s being addressed are brought together into workshops in one room. All parties who own parts of the system are identified and invited to meet and to work with each other. Through this they come to understand their real interdependence.
Teams are built.
- The teams are supported by our experienced external facilitators, who bring a deep experience of applying ‘whole systems’ within manufacturing and in other sectors.
Teams are well equipped and supported.
- The team are taught the principles to unpick and solve complex technical and social systems problems. They are equipped with ‘whole systems’ tools to apply to their system.
Novel, holistic solutions are found.
- Rapid Health Improvement Programmes have a high profile and senior managers are encouraged to back the process and empower the nominated team to act.
Things get done.
- The deliberately tight timescales of the programme create focus and a sense of urgency.
Things get done quickly.
- Local organisation managers and internal change agents can learn about whole system principles and the approach by co-working with us, and then go on to apply it elsewhere.
The approach is transferable.



With this approach teams are systematically created that can really perform. A transformation in organisational fitness can be achieved, giving **an initial 10% to 30% improvement across a range of key performance measures** and then setting them on the path to higher performance. Tricordant can walk your team through this process.

Case Study

A number of years ago one of the Tricordant directors was then the site manager of a UK automotive components factory employing 1500 people. The factory was an Anglo-Japanese joint venture and supplied high-value items ‘just-in-time’, several times a day, direct to the line-side to both a Western- and a Japanese-owned car plant. Under the threat of moving production to low-cost countries in Eastern Europe, and knowing that the plant had state-of-the-art technology and was already fully applying best practice Lean Manufacturing processes and quality improvement techniques, the site embarked on a programme of improving the health of the site and the wholeness of work for the people.

The first phase of initiatives focused on the business process side by clarifying the organisational structure and teams’ targets, delegating responsibility and ownership of problems, building quality into the production process and embracing kaizen (continuous improvement). The second phase of initiatives focused on people’s whole work needs by clarifying teams’ purposes and goals, working on recognition and celebrations, teambuilding workshops, further kaizen initiatives, family and community involvement, the improvement of the working environment, on-site health promotion, and the funding of personal development training.

Achievements are given below. The site was voted ‘Most Improved Supplier of the Year’ by one of the car producers.

Profitability: 4% to 17%

Customer quality: 200ppm to 18ppm

Delivery error: 10% to 0.16%

Kaizen ideas per month: 800 to 1300

Efficiency: 85% to 100.4%

Stock accuracy: unmeasured to 98.5%

Does It Make Business Sense?



The case study shows that it makes sound business sense to tackle organisational unfitness and poor health. We have extensive experience of similar whole systems projects in different sectors with significant success (see more examples in the table below).

The payback on the external investment required is typically only around 4 months. The approach works just as well for small, focused projects on specific problem areas, as for large organisation-wide transformations. Often it's good to start small and organically work outwards.

Tricordant's approach is compatible with Lean and Six Sigma, so we can work with and through these initiatives. Tricordant has worked with a number of large corporations which have had full 'Lean Sigma' programmes in place for years.

<i>Household Product Supply Chain</i>	<i>Clarified how forecasting processes aligned with manufacturing structures and the true aims and purposes of logistics. Delegation to the right level brought motivation.</i>	<i>Reduced warehousing from over 10 to 2, focused on key areas of customer service – saved £10 million.</i>
<i>Energy Utility Service Centre</i>	<i>A whole systems organisation redesign of their pre-pay energy retail services. 200 staff across 3 locations.</i>	<i>Customer debt reductions achieved by the new organisation of £6 million over 6 months.</i>
<i>Pharmaceuticals Manufacturer</i>	<i>Restored whole systems balance for 700 staff across all organisational levels.</i>	<i>Initial savings of £1million p.a. even before efficiency, quality and service benefits started to emerge.</i>

Next Steps?

The Tricordant approach provides a rapid way to address otherwise complex and unmoveable problems. It does not treat the symptoms, but rather treats the causes, and is a way in which to make a real, lasting difference.

We can offer you a wealth of experience, together with a logical, stepwise method, supported by effective aids and tools that will enable you and your organisation to sort out the areas where you've otherwise run out of ideas. We can help you and your staff to rapidly deliver an initial 10% to 30% of improvements and to set the area on the path to a much healthier future. The best next step is probably an exploratory meeting to discuss the issues you are facing within the area you are most concerned about.

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